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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 005610

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/06/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: ANALYZING THE BOMBS

REF: A. BANGKOK 05349 (SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: BANKS BOMBED
IN YALA)

[1](#)B. BANGKOK 05230 (SOUTHERN VIOLENCE: UPDATED
VIOLENCE STATISTICS)

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR SUSAN M. SUTTON. REASON 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. In a September 6 meeting at the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok, instructors from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) met with senior Thai police officials responsible for southern Thailand to discuss ATF analysis of bomb evidence from the South and the recent multiple bomb attacks in Yala province (ref A). Per this analysis and discussion, the majority of bombs appear to be constructed by a handful of individuals, almost all are composed of ammonium nitrate fertilizer and fuel oil--although in the wrong proportion, lowering their effectiveness--and only a single bomb has used military grade explosives. Police have arrested six people in connection to the August 31 Yala bombings. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Based on evidence collected by Royal Thai Police (RTP) officers from Region IX (the South) and the Bangkok-based Crime Suppression Division's forensic unit, ATF officers--who were in Bangkok conducting the Post Blast Investigation course at ILEA--have produced a study on the composition of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in the South. They met with RTP officers on September 6 to discuss their analysis. Per ref B, while shooting attacks remain the primary type of violence in the restive South--and responsible for the majority of deaths--high-profile bombings designed to garner attention but not cause wide casualties appear to be increasing in number.

ATF ANALYSIS

[1](#)3. (C) According to the ATF analysis, there are only four unique construction signatures for at least 70 percent of all of the IEDs in southern Thailand, suggesting that only a handful of individuals are producing the majority of bombs. Almost all IEDs in the South are composed of easily available ammonium nitrate fertilizer and fuel oil (ANFO) with TNT boosters. The mix of fertilizer and fuel oil is not optimal, however, leading to less powerful IEDs. The ATF officers noted that the bomb makers were still making consistent mistakes and producing inefficient devices. The IED attack in Songkhla on August 3 that killed three police and wounded another appears to be the first and only bomb attack that used the correct mix of ingredients.

[1](#)4. (C) Only one bomb using military-grade explosives (C4) has

been found in the South, in the June 16 attempted bombing of the city hall in Sungai Kolok, Narathiwat province (the device was defused by police). Most IEDs rely on hot-glue, vice solder, in their construction. The majority of IEDs in the South are relatively small in size, but larger, buried devices have been used as well; the largest so far was composed of 15 kilograms of ANFO. A series of ANFO bombs constructed out of small fire extinguishers and packed with cut-up pieces of rebar have been used in all three provinces, including two high-profile attempts to blow up bridges. In a surprising wrinkle, almost every IED has used the same exact type of relay. When presented with this clear lead, the senior RTP general present betrayed the Thai police's aversion to following physical evidence by scoffing that it would be too hard to figure out which company manufactured the relay and where it was sold in the South. The ATF instructors explained that their analysts in the United States had, in fact, traced this particular relay to a single Chinese industrial supplier on the internet and that tracing its distribution was not impossible.

YALA BANK BOMBS

15. (C) When asked about the August 31 spate of bomb attacks in Yala province (ref A), RTP officials explained that all of the 27 IEDs used on that day appear to be ANFO IEDs, placed inside a small case hand-constructed from iron support beams. While the size of the charges involved were small, the uniformity of their construction was striking. Almost all of them had been placed in hollowed-out books bearing the title (in Thai and English) "Iran the Cradle of Civilization." Like previous IEDs in the South, these devices used cheap, locally purchased cell phones as initiators. In a twist--possibly reflecting the increasing use of cell-phone

BANGKOK 00005610 002 OF 002

jammers by the police--the cell phones's internal alarm clock was used to initiate the explosion; these IEDs were not dependent upon an outside signal. Most of the devices used local newspapers as packing material--one partially destroyed page was an article about Thai police bomb investigation teams, suggesting that the bomb-makers are following RTG tactics with interest.

16. (C) While the investigation into the Yala bombings is ongoing, police have arrested at least six people suspected of having planted the bombs. RTP officials are convinced that local technical students are behind the latest attacks, given the relative sophistication of the devices and witness reports that those placing the bombs were dressed as young students. At least one woman was reportedly involved in delivering an IED. Many of these arrests were based upon low-quality closed circuit television camera footage from within the target banks. Those arrested, however, appear to be low-level "gophers" who were paid 2000 Thai Baht (about \$50, U.S.) to deliver the IEDs to their targets (Note. Only one person has ever been arrested for manufacturing IEDs in the South over the past two years, in a raid in Narathiwat earlier this year. End Note.) One suspect in the Yala bombings was arrested based on witness information. Apparently this suspect actually deposited his new 2000 Baht windfall in a local bank immediately before leaving an IED in the same branch.
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